

The First Special Service Force was the first official special operations unit in American history. It was formed in July 1942 as a result of a top secret plan conceived by the Chiefs of Staff of the United States and Great Britain to assemble a new type of fighting force capable of combining special warfare tactics and speed of movement to attack and destroy key military and industrial installations in Europe supporting the Nazi war effort.

It was initially composed of 1,800 American and Canadian volunteers who had been mountaineers, loggers, ranch hands and outdoorsmen before the war. They received extensive training at Fort William Henry Harrison, Montana, in parachuting, demolitions, mountain-climbing, winter warfare and amphibious landings.

From 1943 onward, the First Special Service Force took part in high risk missions in the Aleutian Islands in Alaska, in Italy and in the south of France; and they were the first Allied unit to enter liberated Rome. During combat operations at Anzio, Italy, captured Nazi documents indicated that, due to their ferocity and stealth in combat, the Germans had begun referring to the First Special Service Force as "the Black Devils." It was from this revelation that the unit received its nickname—the Devil's Brigade. By the end of the war, the First Special Service Force lost a total of 2,314 men, equating to 134 percent of the original combat force.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is my honor to recognize the service and sacrifice of those valiant American and Canadian volunteers who served the cause of freedom as members of the First Special Service Force. Their dedication to duty, their selfless service to their countries, and their enormous contribution toward halting the spread of Nazi tyranny bear testament to the shared heritage of freedom between the United States and Canada. My wife Vicki joins me in saluting the men of the First Special Service Force on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the formation of the First Special Service Force.

IN HONOR OF PRESIDENT BUJAR  
NISHANI

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 28, 2012*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mr. Bujar Nishani, the President of Albania, on the occasion of the dedication of the Albanian Cultural Garden, taking place on September 22, 2012.

President Nishani was born in Durrës on September 29, 1966. He obtained a law degree from the Justice Faculty of Tirana University in 2004 and a Masters Degree in European Studies from the same university a year later. President Nishani began a long career in public service in 1993 as the Director of Foreign Affairs at the Ministry of Defense. A year later, he began serving at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Relations Department of the Ministry of Affairs.

President Nishani's political career began in 1991, when he first became a member of the Democratic Party. In 2001, he was elected as the Secretary of the Tirana Democratic Party

Branch. Two years later he was elected as a member of the Tirana Municipal Council. In 2005, President Nishani was elected as a parliamentary member of Tirana's 34th electoral district. He later went on to serve as Minister of Interior and the Minister of Justice. In July of this year, Mr. Nishani was sworn in as President of the Republic of Albania.

Mr. Nishani is married to Mrs. Odeta Nishani, and has two children: Ersi and Fjona. The dedication of the Albanian Cultural Garden will also commemorate the 100th year of Albanian Independence and the dedication of the Mother Teresa memorial statue.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of President Bujar Nishani and in recognition of his visit to Cleveland, Ohio on the occasion of the dedication of the Albanian Cultural Garden.

CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

**HON. LOU BARLETTA**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 28, 2012*

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the parishioners of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, who are celebrating the church's 150th anniversary. In 1862, several members of the first German congregation in Hazleton established a separate church to identify themselves as distinctly Lutheran. On September 25, 1862, the cornerstone was dedicated, and the Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church began its mission of glorifying God.

The church faced many challenges throughout the years, from adjusting to our nation's customs and general society to growing its congregation. In the late 1800s, parishioners of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church recognized the importance of helping parishioners assimilate into the community and culture, so the English language was introduced at worship services. By 1903, parishioners formed their first English Sunday School and demonstrated a strong commitment to a Christian education for all ages. As the number of the church's devoted parishioners grew, the congregation built a new church and, most importantly, a new Sunday school. The buildings, which still stand today, were dedicated on November 2, 1930.

Today, the dedicated parishioners of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church continue the virtuous work started by their forefathers 150 years ago. To help the people in their community, the church has partnered with Seeds of Hope, a nonprofit organization that assists families in crisis, and the Salvation Army. Through these organizations, this church's parishioners help maintain a food pantry, provide services such as property cleanup to promote a safe environment for children, and donate to the Salvation Army's food and clothing drives. The present church is the result of faithfulness to the teachings, customs, and traditions of the Lutheran church. With the guidance of their present pastor, Reverend Wayne Lupole, the church welcomes all families as they seek to explore the rich Christian faith.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my most sincere congratulations and deepest respect to the parishioners of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, and I wish them many years of successful, faithful future service.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RAQUEL  
CREITOFF

**HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 28, 2012*

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to commemorate the life and work of Raquel Creitoff, who passed away on September 6 at the age of 90.

Raquel Creitoff was born in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, on December 7, 1921, but left her native island in the mid-1940s to live in Manhattan. Raquel soon began working as a member of the staff of the old Migration Division of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico of office in New York City. The office's goal, and Raquel's work, was to help Puerto Ricans moving from the island to New York City, adjust to their new home. From housing to jobs to health services, the Migration Division helped Puerto Ricans establish new lives in unfamiliar surroundings. For close to half a century, Raquel worked in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's offices in New York City, and was a dedicated public servant who helped countless Puerto Ricans who had made the trip from the island to New York City in search of economic opportunity.

Raquel was a well-recognized leader of the Puerto Rican community in New York. She was active in numerous organizations, including the Puerto Rican Family Institute and the New York Chapter of the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women. Additionally, she served on the Board of Universidad Boricua, previously known as Boricua College.

Over the years, Raquel helped countless individuals in the Bronx and in New York City. She will be missed.

HONORING THE VOLUSIA HONOR  
AIR VETERANS FROM CENTRAL  
FLORIDA

**HON. JOHN L. MICA**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 28, 2012*

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Central Florida Veterans who will be participating in the Volusia Honor Air flight to our Nation's capital on Saturday, September 29, 2012.

Over the past five years, the Volusia Honor Air program has provided an opportunity for our World War II Veterans from the Central Florida area to travel to Washington, DC to visit the memorial built in their honor. That one day event for these World War II heroes is one of the most special in their lives and is certainly well deserved.

Since the first flight in 2008 the program has accommodated more than 1,000 veterans in hosting a special visit to their memorial. This flight marks the 10th and final flight for the program.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize each veteran of this final Volusia Honor